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FROM GENEVA TO FOREIGN OFFICE
(United Kingdom Mission)

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Mr. Carter

No. 880
December 4, 1961

D. 7.40 p.m. December 4, 1961
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IMMEDIATE
SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 880 of December 4,

Repeated for information to	Vientiane	[Priority]
	Washington	"
	Saigon	"
	Singapore	
	Bangkok	
and Saving to	New Delhi	Canberra
	Ottawa	Wellington
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GUARD

Following from MacDonald.

I had some longish conversations with Harriman before he left Geneva on Saturday afternoon. On Laos the only fresh point I need report is that I think he is toying with the idea of the Americans transferring their main support from Phoumi to some alternative candidate as the leader of the right wing in a Laotian Government. He says this would be much easier if there were an alternative general to back, so that there is no division or disintegration of the Royal Laotian Government armed forces. He fears, however, that there is no effective alternative military leader, and that Phoumi may have too strong support from his most important military subordinates. Amongst political leaders he is attracted by Phoui Sanonikone. I did not demur from this, because I was impressed again by Phoui's steadiness, good sense, etc., at the conference here. But I reminded Harriman that there may be personal difficulties between Phoui and Souvanna Phouma. If Addis has any views on the possibility and desirability of Phoui emerging

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as an effective and genial collaborator with Souvanna Phouma on his right wing, he will, no doubt, let us have them.

2. Harriman's only other comment of significance on Laos was a remark that if the new Laotian Government does not (repeat not) wish the International Commission to have any function regarding the demobilization of "private armies" we can do nothing effective about it in our agreement here, He said our future action depends on their views.

3. Pegarding Viet Nam, he told me that in a final talk with Pushkin à deux the latter emphasized the importance which the Russians attach to an agreement on Laos, and Pushkin added that this could have a good effect on international relations generally and be a precedent for further actions. When Harriman asked what further actions, and enquired whether Pushkin had Viet Nam in mind, Pushkin made no reply and changed the subject.

4. I am inclined to think that in his recent talks with Pushkin on the subject he has not (repeat not) admitted the possibility of the American aid to South Viet Nam exceeding the permitted 1954 Agreement limitations in some respects; but I cannot be sure of this. Sometimes in talks he does not fit his hearing aid into his bad ear, and it occasionally seems that this prevents him from hearing what he himself says as well as what others say. In any case, there have been occasions when he has denied saying things afterwards which we have all heard him say. So I am not exactly sure just what he has said to Pushkin.

5. In all recent talks with Harriman I have positively opposed his idea that the Viet Nam question might be taken up by Pushkin and me at Geneva, either with or without consultation with other delegations. I have expressed the view that when the time is ripe for talks between the Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference, these should start in exchanges between London and Moscow (naturally in consultation with Washington on the British side.) I think he now accwpts this.

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